

My dear Tom

Rome Mon 10 June 1872

'Tis long since we've had a chat & I think you'll be looking for a scribble from me which I know always gives you pleasure

I am afraid that as yet you've nothing pleasant in the weather as we are even badly off, rain cold & wind cut me up & put me in despair for I've been on a week's visit to paint landscape, but no - for 'twas like November

Maria gave me a little better account of you in her last letter, but evidently you want a good summer's warmth to set you up, I'm glad you get down to dinner sometimes

A great longing to be 'mourt you all got hold of me last month, but the Doctors advised me that one winter in England would cripple me up for life & so as I ^{have} the happiness to be well I'll 'een 'let well alone

Lately I have had the delight of a visit from my Arthur & his Bride with Mr J Ruskin Mrs Hilliard & her daughter & Mr Goodwin & a young brash)

This was indeed a treat & no doubt my desire to return was partly caused by the charming Bride offering me an asylum in her house at Thorne Hill fearing that I might have been left penniless. In the recent visit she showed me great affection & I was able to draw her picture & produce one of my best works - This journey is an invite of Mr. John Ruskind, but I fear at this moment they may be hampered with the rain & inundations in the north of Italy - my Arthur is pursuing his painting tho' not quite brilliantly as at first, he has now the misfortune of a little independance which may impede his working.

I dare say you were all trembling for me but with the aid of my son Walter all is set right tho' I've only just enough over for a Cat now & then when I'm idle & shabby - Every thing is so increased in price in Rome that 'tis a hard push to make both ends meet, tho' I did think myself rent free, but my landlord is dead & I have to contrive a new lease with the Prince Pombino of which I've good hopes, except that every thing is changing in Rome.

I have felt somewhat painful my loneliness, but
now I have the good offer of my excellent Tolpe
Doctor & his two ladies (wife & sister) to take
house with me & all responsibility - we are to
sleep together & as I regard him as a great Doctor
& will be a consolation - Then my 2^d Sec^t & his
father are also coming so I shall have a pleasant
company about me & looking after me - I have
the old servant woman still, good cook & devoted
to me so that altogether I may consider myself
well to do ^{but} my painting does not flourish for I'm
sinking down into idleness, perhaps I need repose.
As I have no longer any man servant I do all my
little business myself, go to the post make bargains
tho I do little in the way of visits - 'Up at 6 o'clock
I have my breakfast at 7 & dine at 2, 'tho odd to
me having only to think of myself after always ^{having}
had to think of 10 persons, this may have to do with
my loneliness after such an active life

The "Acqua Marcia" will soon pay me interest
as it is extending all over Rome & much liked
The building going on is quite wonderful
indeed Rome is being brushed up to a great extent
I think I told you how kindly Lord Granville
& Mr. Gladstone had behaved to me & what they
have done is rather 'against rule tho' I hear that

Our weather is now warmer tho' not settled, the
north of Italy is all inundated & millions of
people without roof or bread

As I am not strong enough to bear much trouble
I have taken to wear a simple flannel shirt with
false collar & cuffs, this for the heat will be good
but I propose a thick flannel in the winter

Now I am giving you no end of chatter but you
said you wanted it & as my time is now my own
so now 'tis also yours

My hands altho so sadly out of drawing are not
at all impaired for my drawing & painting, I drew
a statue in the Villa with firmness & accuracy,
indeed you'll judge by my improved writing how
well I'm "coming it" not that my hands will ever
recover the deformity, or that I shall be ever able
to take the octave, yet these are trivial matters
compared with my dread of being a cripple

By this time I hope poor Tom will have got fine
weather & that you may be relieved of the pain in
your leg - I use daily a brush made of twigs which
does me such good that I cannot miss it even a day.
The moment I'm up I scrub all over me & once a
week do the same with warm water, this is quite my
own idea & I done it for 6 years, certainly I have
gained strength lately. - Poor dear Nelly I ^{am} glad to hear
is better - how is Emma in Egypt? your loving Joe